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# OT 520 Old Testament Introduction

Sandra Richter

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# OT 520

## Introduction to the Old Testament

Asbury Theological Seminary  
Spring 2008

**INSTRUCTOR:**

Dr. Sandra Richter  
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SPO 1320  
Office: BC317, 858-2032

**OFFICE HOURS:**

TBA

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course is designed to lay a foundation for the rest of the student's seminary career by familiarizing the student with the story of Redemption as told in the Old Testament. To accomplish this goal, the student will be exposed to the geographical and socio-historical context from which the Old Testament emerges; the genre, content, historical flow, and theological structure of the Old Testament Canon; and the scholarship which has sought for generations to understand this collection of Scripture. It is my hope that this class will provide the student with a **framework** for their study of the OT, while investing in each a profound excitement and respect for these sacred texts.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- 1) To become familiar with the history and geography of the biblical world in order to contextualize the OT narrative in real space and time.
- 2) To become familiar with the sociological structure of the biblical world in order to contextualize OT personalities within the societal and relational structures from which they emerge. (This cross-cultural exercise will also further equip the student to cross-culturally communicate in a responsible manner within their own context of ministry.)
- 3) To become familiar with the intentional theological structure of the OT in order to relate its message of redemption to that of the New and to the contemporary Christian community.
- 4) To be exposed to issues of genre and authorship in order to facilitate future study and exposition of the text for the purposes of Christian ministry.
- 5) To engage the major questions of OT study and scholarship (historicity, canonicity, authorship) in order to equip the student to respond to these same questions for those they are called to serve.

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## COURSE PROCEDURES & REQUIREMENTS:

### Method of Instruction:

The format of the class will be primarily lecture augmented by small and large group discussion. Student responsibilities will include a careful **reading** of a broad selection of materials in required and recommended texts.

### Textbooks:

Both the textbooks and the Coursepacket are available for purchase at the bookstore; a number of your readings will be available through the library's online archives. There will be numerous **handouts** for this class which will be distributed *once* in class, and always available on the Intranet.

### To be purchased:

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form and Background of the OT*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996)

James B. Pritchard, ed. *The HarperCollins Concise Atlas of the Bible* (HarperSanFrancisco, 1997)

Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel Its Life and Institutions in the Biblical Resource Series* (Grand Rapids: Wm B Eerdmans/Livonia: Dove Book Sellers, 1997)

WJ Dumbrell, *The Faith of Israel: A Theological Survey of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002)

Bill T. Arnold & Bryan E. Beyer, eds. *Readings from the Ancient Near East* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002)

### To be purchased if you're rich, or borrowed if you're not:

Jon Levenson, *Sinai & Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (HarperSanFrancisco, 1985)

Brevard S. Childs, *OT Theology in a Canonical Context* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985)

**Coursepacket** (a number of your required readings are found here)

## REQUIREMENTS

**20% QUIZZES.** *Each* Tuesday students will be *briefly* quizzed on assigned reading. Of these quizzes, the lowest grade will be dropped. There will be no make-ups. In addition, most of the quizzes will have an "extra" question drawn from the recommended readings. Students will be able to gain 5 additional percentage points over the course of the semester by correctly answering these "extra" questions.

**10% BOOK REVIEW.** A three-four page book review of Jon Levenson's *Sinai & Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible*. This review should answer the following three questions: (1) What is the content of this book?; (2) How does this content interact with other course material?; (3) What is the student's response to the information and arguments presented in this book? This book review must be well-written, presented in standard form, clean and critical. (In reading Levenson's book, some people find it helpful to read the "Introduction" last.) Reviews received after the posted hour will be penalized a third of a grade per day, weekends included! Further instructions are available in "How to Write a Book Review" on the Intranet.

### 30% MIDTERM EXAM

**40% FINAL EXAM.** To score an "A" on the midterm and final exam the student must show evidence of having critically synthesized reading material and class presentations and must display familiarity with the bulk of the recommended readings.

**GROUPS.** *Mos!* Thursdays we will break into small discussion groups in order to evaluate some aspect of the assigned reading and synthesize it with class material. Attendance in these groups will be recorded. One absence from the Thursday discussion groups will be waived, additional absences will result in the deduction of 2 percentage points from your final evaluation. Although not required, it is strongly suggested that students use their discussion groups as study groups in order to provide further opportunity to process and interact with course material and prep for exams.

**PRESENCE,** preparedness and participation are always expected. Class absences will be considered in your final evaluation.

## READING & LECTURE SCHEDULE

# Part I: The Big Picture

### 2/6 INTRODUCTION & THE BIBLE AS THE STORY OF REDEMPTION

#### 2/8 THE OT IN TIME & SPACE

De Vaux, pp. 3-61, "Nomadism & Family Institutions"

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, "Geography," pp. 619-631

Atlas, pp. 8-13, **36**, 60-61

**Recommended:** Lawrence Stager, "The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel" *BASOR* 260 (1985): 1-35.

#### 2/13 THE CONCEPT OF COVENANT

quiz

M. Weinfeld, "עֲרֵב בְּרִית" *TDOT*, pp. 253-79 (\*265-276)

Frank Cross, "Kinship and Covenant in Ancient Israel" in *From Epic to Canon*, pp. 3-21

Kenneth Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament*, 90-102. See the following website:

[http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/book\\_ancientorient.html](http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/book_ancientorient.html) You are reading a section from chapter 5 "Hebrew Contacts with Eastern Religions."

**Recommended:** "Covenants & Treaties," *Readings from the Ancient Near East*, ed. Bill Arnold and Bryan Beyer, 96-103

#### 2/15 MORE ON COVENANT

"The Book of the Covenant" Exodus 19:1-23:19

Deuteronomy 1:1-6:25; 28:1-30:20; Isaiah 1:1-31; Jer 34:18-20

**Recommended:** Deuteronomy 6:26-34:12 (i.e. the rest of Deuteronomy)

56 LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, "Deuteronomy," pp. 111-127

#### 2/20 GOD'S ORIGINAL INTENT: EDEN

quiz

Genesis, chapters 1-4, Psalm 8

Henri Blocher, "Approaching Genesis" and "The Week of Creation" in *In the Beginning*, pp. 15-59

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 15-31, "Genesis: Primeval Prologue"

**Recommended:** *Readings from the Ancient Near East*, "Enuma Elish, #6 pp. 31-50; Childs, "Male & Female as a Theological Problem," 188-195

#### 2/22 GOD'S FINAL INTENT: THE NEW JERUSALEM

Exodus 24:12-26:37 (looking for *cherubim*, rivers, and trees)

Ezekiel 47:1-12 (if this is the first time you've read Ezekiel, read a summary of the book and this particular section of the book in a Bible handbook, Eerdmans is excellent)

Revelation 19:11-22:21

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, "The Authority of the OT," "Revelation," "Canon," pp. 585-605 34

#### 2/27 NOAH

quiz

Genesis 5:1-11:32

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 32-51, "Genesis: Patriarchal History"

Atlas, 58-59

Dumbrell, "Introduction; Genesis" pp. 9-31

**Recommended:** *Readings from the Ancient Near East*, "Atrahasis," #5 pp. 21-31; "The Gilgamesh Epic," #12, pp. 66-70; cf. "The Sumerian King's List," #45 p. 150.

3/1      **ABRAHAM**

Genesis 12:1-36:43

Atlas, 14-17

Childs, "The Recipients of God's Revelation," 92-107

Reread Weinfeld *TDOT*, pp. 270-272

**Recommended:** Gary Knoppers, "Ancient Near Eastern Royal Grants and the Davidic Covenant: A Parallel?" *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 116/4 (1996): 670-97; K. Kitchen, "The Patriarchal Age: Myth or History?" *BAR* (March 1995): 48-57; 88-95 (this will be required reading later; this article can be accessed through the online library archives. Log onto Asbury Scholar>Biblical Archaeology Society Archive> enter some of the bibliographic data into the search fields>viola!)

3/6      **MOSES**

quiz

Genesis 37, 39-41, 47:1-Exodus 18:27

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 63 -79, "Exodus: Message"

Atlas, pp. 34-35, "Exodus & Wanderings"

Childs, "The Theological Significance of the Decalogue," pp. 63-83, *OT Theology in a Canonical Context*

**Recommended:**

Childs, "Benefits of the Covenant: the Cultus," pp. 155-174

3/8      **EXCURSUS: THE TABERNACLE: "So that I may dwell among them..." Exodus 25:8**

G.R. Osborn, "Type, Typology," pp. 1117-19

Exodus 24-34 (some review here)

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, 80-98, "Leviticus"

Dumbrell, "Exodus; Leviticus; Numbers," pp. 32-56

**Recommended:** de Vaux, pp. 274-311: "Semitic Sanctuaries," "The First Israelite Sanctuaries"

3/13      **DAVID**

quiz

1 Samuel 16:1-2 Samuel 12:31

Atlas, pp. 46-51, "The Kingdom of Saul," "David's Rise to Power," "David's Consolidation"

LaSor, Hubbard, & Bush, "Deuteronomy – Former Prophets," 111-137

**Recommended:** Childs, pp. 108-121, "Agents of God's Rule: Moses, Judges, Kings"

55

3/15      **THE NEW COVENANT:**

Scott Hafemann, *Paul, Moses and the History of Israel*: "The Meaning of the 'New Covenant' in Jeremiah 31," pp. 129-40

Matt 1:1-3:17; 21:1-11

Gal 2; 3:15-29

Luke 1

1 Corinthians 15

John 1:1-34; 14:1-7

Hebrews, chptrs 8-11

**Recommended:** both of these are available through regular reserves at Info Commons

Jon Levenson, *The Death & Resurrection of the Beloved Son*, pp. 1-17; \*25-31

N.T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 231-257

3/20      **Start Part II: Close Ups**

3/22      **MIDTERM EXAM**

## Part II: Close Ups

### 3/22 **THE PENTATEUCH: STRUCTURE & AUTHORSHIP**

The Book of Numbers

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 3-14 "Pentateuch"

"JEDP-in-a-nutshell" Handout

Frank M. Cross, "The Priestly Work," *Canaanite Myth & Hebrew Epic*, pp. 293-324

**Recommended:** *Face of OT Studies*, pp. 116-144, "Pondering the Pentateuch: The Search for a New Paradigm" (on regular reserves in the library)

### 3/27 **THE PATRIARCHS**

quiz

Genesis 25:1-37:36

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, "The Chronological Puzzle," 632-640

\*Reread LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, 1-51

K. Kitchen, "The Patriarchal Age: Myth or History?" *BAR* (March 1995): 48-57; 88-95 (this article can be accessed through the online library archives. Log onto Asbury Scholar>Biblical Archaeology Society Archive>enter some of the bibliographic data into the search fields>viola!

[**Review** Atlas, pp. 14-21, "Abraham's Migration" etc; LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 32-51]

**Recommended:** J. Hackett, "Women's Studies & the Hebrew Bible," pp. 141-64 in *The Future of Biblical Studies*; 141-64; Maynard P. Maidman, "Abraham, Isaac & Jacob meet Newton, Darwin & Wellhausen" *BAR* (May/June 2006): 60-64; OR read Wayne Pitard, "Before Israel: Syria-Palestine in the Bronze Age" pages 33-77 in *The Oxford History of the Biblical World*, ed. Michael D. Coogan. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001 (find in hardbound periodicals in library).

### 3/29 **THE EXODUS: MYTH OR HISTORY?**

Reread Exodus 13:1-19:6

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 52-62 "Exodus: Historical Background"; pp. 641-57 [skim 658-87]

"Archaeology"

Kevin D. Miller, "Did the Exodus Never Happen?" *Christianity Today* 42/10 [Sept 1998]: 44-51.

Atlas, pp. 18-21, *review* p. 34-35

**Recommended:** J. Hoffmeier, "Egypt, Plagues in" *ABD* 2:374-78; de Vaux, "Slaves," pp. 80-90

James K. Hoffmeier, "Out of Egypt: The Archaeological Context of the Exodus" *BAR* 33/1 (Jan/Feb 2007): 30-41, 77.

## READING WEEK, April 2-6

### 4/10 **THE DEUTERONOMISTIC HISTORY: STRUCTURE & AUTHORSHIP**

quiz

Dumbrell, "Deuteronomy-Judges," 57-80

Frank Cross, "The Themes of the Book of Kings and the Structure of the Deuteronomistic History,"

*Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, pp. 274-289.

Review Deuteronomy chptrs 1-4; Joshua chapters 1, 12 (summary of conquest battles) and 23; Judges 2:11-23; 1 Samuel 12; 1 Kgs 8:12-51; 2 Kgs 17 (the peroration of Samaria); 2 Kgs 22 & 23 (Josiah's reform), 25 (the fall of the southern kingdom).

**Recommended:** Richter, "The Deuteronomistic History" *Dictionary of the Historical Books IVP* (pdf posted in course center)

### 4/12 **THE CONQUEST & SETTLEMENT: THE ERA OF THE JUDGES & THE TRIBAL LEAGUE**

The Books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth

Atlas, pp. 38-45, "Conquests," "Occupation," etc.

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 138-164 "Joshua" "Judges"

de Vaux, pp. 91-99, "The Israelite Concept of State"

**Recommended:** *Face of OT Studies*, "Historiography of the OT," pp. 145-75 (on regular reserves in the library).

Book Reviews due on Monday, 4/14 at 5:00 pm.

4/17     **THE RISE OF THE UNITED MONARCHY & ISRAEL'S GOLDEN AGE**

quiz

1 Kings 1:1-9:9

Dumbrell, "Samuel-Kings," 81-104

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, 165-196 "Birth of Monarchy," "Golden Age"

"David Found at Dan" *BAR* 20/2 (March/April 1994): 74-87 (this article can be accessed through the Biblical Archaeology Society Archive link at the library.

Atlas [*review* pp. 48-51], pp. 52-57, "The Economy of Solomon's Kingdom," etc.

**Recommended:**

Philip Davies, "'House of David' Built on Sand," 54-55 (available through *BAS* archive)

Anson Rainey, "'House of David' and the House of the Deconstructionists," 47 (available through *BAS* archive)

4/19     **THE POETS & SAGES OF ISRAEL: THE BOOK OF PSALMS & THE WISDOM LITERATURE**

Psalms: 1, 2, 3, 8, 44, 46, 73, 88, 95, 96, 111, 150 (note divisions of five Books)

Proverbs: 1, 2, 3. 22:17-23:11 (note ANE parallels), 30, 31

Ecclesiastes

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 231-242, 425-470

Dumbrell, "Psalms-Proverbs," 245-273

Wisdom Readings out of *Readings from the Ancient Near East: "Instructions of Amenhotep,"* #69, pp. 187-189; "Ludlul Bel Nemeqi (I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom)," #64, pp. 177-79 and "Babylonian

Theodicy" #65, pp. 179-82.

**Recommended:** LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 471-519 (read selectively)

de Vaux, "The Temple at Jerusalem," pp. 312-330

4/24     **THE DIVIDED MONARCHY**

quiz

1 Kings 11:1-22:53 (Ahijah & Elijah); 2 Kgs 18-23:27 (Hezekiah, Manasseh & Josiah)

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 197-220, "The Divided Monarchy"

de Vaux, pp. 100-138, "The Person of the King," etc.

**Recommended:** *Face of OT Studies*, "The Historical Study of the Monarchy: Developments & Detours," pp. 207-235 (on regular reserves in the library)

4/26     **THE OFFICE OF THE PROPHET:**

**Reread:** Deuteronomy, chptrs 13 & 18

**Read:** LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 221-230 (see chart, pp. 224-226); 243-269.

Childs, "The Office & Function of the Prophet," pp. 122-144

[Review *TDOT*, "tyrb," pp. 276-279]

**Recommended:** Theodore Mullen, "Divine Assembly" *ABD* 2:214-17; (1 Kgs 22:1-40; Isa 6; Jer 23:18, 22; Amos 3:7, 8; Malachi 3:1)

5/1     **THE WRITINGS OF THE PROPHETS: CONTENT & HERMENEUTICS**

quiz

Dumbrell, "Isaiah," 107-132

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, "Jeremiah," pp. 328-355

Hosea chapters 1-4: **Hosea**

Isaiah 1, 3-9:7, 36-38, 40: **Isaiah**

Jeremiah chapters 1-5; 7 and 31 (cf. Hebrews chptrs 8 & 9): **Jeremiah**

**Recommended:** YHWH's prophets sent to Assyria: Jonah & Nahum

5/3      **THE COLLAPSE OF THE MONARCHY & THE EXILIC COMMUNITY: DANIEL & EZEKIEL**  
Malamat, "Caught Between the Great Powers: the Fall of Judah" *BAR* (July/Aug 1999): 34-41, 64  
(available through BAS archive)  
Atlas, pp. 88-89, "Nebuchadnezzar"  
LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, "Daniel," 566-582  
Dumbrell, "Ezekiel," 151-170  
Ezekiel chptrs 1-3, 10  
Daniel chptrs 1-4, 7

**Recommended:** G.E. Ladd, "Apocalyptic," *The Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* pp. 62-65

5/8      **THE CHRONICLER'S HISTORY: THE RETURN & RESTORATION OF**  
**THE POST-EXILIC COMMUNITY**

**quiz**

1 Chronicles chptrs 1-14, 23; 2 Chron 1, 9, 36; Ezra chptrs 1-6; Nehemiah 8-9  
LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, pp. 532-565, "Chronicler," "Ezra-Nehemiah," "Esther"  
Atlas, pp. 90-91, "The Persian Empire"

5/10      **CATCH-UP**

**THE INTERTESTAMENTAL PERIOD READING:**

LaSor, Hubbard & Bush, "Formation of the Old Testament," pp. 606-618  
Atlas pp. 92-103; 1 & 2 Maccabees (read selectively)

**Recommended:** de Vaux, ""The Priesthood (before & after the temple)," pp. 372-405

**FINAL EXAM:** Wednesday May 21, 12:30-2:30 pm